

Minutes of the meeting of the WBF Laws Committee held in Bermuda
on 20th January 2000

Present: Ton Kooijman (Chair)
 The President Emeritus
 Ralph Cohen co Vice-Chairman
 Chip Martel co Vice-Chairman
 Grattan Endicott Secretary
 Virgil Anderson
 Cecil Cook
 Joan Gerard
 Dan Morse
 Rebecca Rogers
 John Wignall

 Jeffrey Polisner General Counsel

By invitation Richard Colker
 David Silber
 Linda Trent
 Nadine Wood

Apologies again recorded from Carlos Cabanne and Santanu Ghose

1. Mr. Schoder asked that the Committee should attend to its own remit and not digress into areas that are the prerogative of other entities.
2. Considering the minutes of the meeting of January 12th, paragraph 6, Mr. Martel wished to clarify that he was referring to the motivation for writing the law; but the law as now written does not allow of the distinction between reasons for changing the call that the Committee is desirous of making. A question was asked as to how many rulings based on Law 25B had been given in the current tournament. The Chief Director replied that there had been at least six. The Chairman reminded the committee that it had been agreed to put consideration of the subject back to the major review of the laws, envisaged to occur in the period 2002-2005. The Secretary recorded his reservation that he did not consider it in the best interests of bridge that the committee, having an overwhelming balance of opinion that Law 25B is seriously flawed and needs to be deleted or radically altered, should do nothing about it until the year 2005.

2.

3. In respect of Law 25B the committee recorded its decision that information received from the action of any other player after a call is made is not authorized for use in deciding to change the call. Such information is unauthorized to the player for that current turn. (See Schedule 3 to minutes of 11th January.)
4. The Secretary undertook to seek publication of a disclaimer on the WBF web to the effect that no opinion, unless the recorded corporate decision of the committee, should be considered to have the authority of a committee decision. Directors seeking guidance should refer to their respective NCBOs. It was agreed that when subjects arise the committee could have its own internal exchange of opinions via the internet.
5. The committee perused a report by Mr. Kooijman relating to Tournament Directors. The committee liked the approach, but considered it a matter for the Chief Tournament Director to implement and not a subject for the committee.
6. Referring to a minute of the 12th January meeting the committee noted that the Systems Committee is proposing an interim regulation of 'encrypted' signals. Although the subject may be looked at in any major revision of the laws, general opinion was that the question is one for regulation rather than law. Law 40D empowers a regulating authority to make such a regulation. If a good definition of this type of signal were available it could be offered to regulating authorities for possible use worldwide.
7. The committee considered situations where an obscure call is made and the partner informs opponent that his side has no agreement concerning it. It was noted that neither the WBF in its code of practice, nor the ACBL, recognizes 'convention disruption' as an infraction in itself. The Chief Director referred to the requirement for the responder to give full information, including agreements relating to relevant alternative calls. The committee observed that the Director in forming an opinion as to the existence of a partnership understanding should take into account subsequent action in the auction. In relation to Laws 75C and 75D the Director is required to determine what agreements the partnership has.
8. Mr. Martel would like the committee to look at possibilities of removing the partner from the table and inviting the player who made the call to explain his intention.

3.

9. The Secretary was invited to refer a statement by Mr. Kooijman on the position in paragraph 7 above to the Code of Practice Committee for consideration.
10. There was discussion on laws for electronic bridge. It transpired that Mr. Colker is contracted to OK Bridge to provide laws for them, and has permission to use the ACBL lawbook as the basis. It was strongly desired that there should be co-operation between all interested in the subject, and the view was expressed that as a worldwide activity its rules should have the participation and approval of the WBF. Exchanges of material were felt to be appropriate, and Mr. Wignall urged early progress in the matter.
11. It was agreed to look in any major review of the laws at a possibility of merging the procedures under Laws 26A and 26B. In the interim it is agreed that Law 26A only applies where a withdrawn call relates only to one or more specified suits. A withdrawn call showing a mixture of specified and unspecified suits is to be dealt with under 25B.
12. The committee noted the final words of 'The Scope of the Laws'. It noted that score adjustment is for the purpose of redressing damage to a non-offending side and to take away any advantage from the offending side, not for punishment of offenders.
13. Members of the committee expressed their satisfaction with what the committee had done in Bermuda. The Chairman drew the meeting to a close.